

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1(Currently Amended). A slip shaft assembly for use with a steering column, comprising:

an elongated tubular outer shaft;

an elongated inner shaft extending lengthwise within said outer shaft; and

a slip joint coupling said inner and outer shafts and operative to transmit torque in opposite directions between said shafts and to enable relative axial movement between said shafts, said slip joint including a plurality of rollers mounted on said inner shaft for rotation about respective roller axes transverse to a longitudinal axis of said inner shaft, wherein at least some of said plurality of rollers are spaced axially along said inner shaft relative to others of said plurality of rollers ~~wherein said rollers are provided in diametrically opposite, opposed pairs, and wherein there are at least two sets of said roller pairs,~~ said slip joint including a single roller track surface associated with each of said rollers on said outer shaft and engaging and rollably supporting each associated roller on only one side thereof during transmission of said torque in said opposite directions.

2(Cancelled).

3(Previously Amended). The assembly of claim 1 wherein said outer shaft includes four of said roller track surfaces, two of which are associated with a first of said sets of said roller pairs, and the remaining two of which are associated with at least a second of said sets of said roller pairs.

4(Original). The assembly of claim 3 wherein said sets of roller pairs are arranged 90° offset from one another.

5(Original). The assembly of claim 4 wherein said single roller track surfaces associated with said first set of roller pairs are arranged to transmit torque between said inner and outer shafts in one direction through contact with a first side of said rollers of said first set, and said single set of roller track surfaces associated with said second set of said roller pairs are arranged to transmit torque between the shafts in the opposite direction through contact with an opposite second side of said rollers of said second set.

6(Original). The assembly of claim 1 wherein said rollers are unsupported by said outer shaft apart from said contact with said single track support surfaces.

7(Currently Amended). A ~~[[step]]~~ slip shaft assembly, comprising:

an elongated tubular outer shaft;

an elongated inner shaft extending lengthwise within said outer shaft;

a plurality of generally V-shaped deformations formed in said tubular shaft and extending lengthwise of said tubular shaft and defining a corresponding plurality of adjacent roller track pairs arranged at about 90° to one another and separated by an inner connecting bridge; and

a plurality of rollers carried by said inner shaft and disposed in torque-transmitting contact with a respective one or each of said roller tracks of said roller track pairs.

8(Previously Presented). The assembly of claim 7 wherein said plurality of said roller track pairs comprises two of said pairs.

9(Previously Presented). The assembly of claim 8 wherein said roller track pairs are diametrically opposed to one another.

10(Currently Amended). The assembly of claim 8 wherein ~~[[these]]~~ there are four of said rollers.

11(Currently Amended). The assembly of claim 7 wherein ~~[[these]]~~ there are two of said generally V-shaped ~~indentations~~ deformations and four of said rollers.

12(New). The assembly of claim 1 wherein said plurality of rollers included a plurality of diametrically opposed pairs of said rollers.

13(New). The assembly of claim 12 wherein at least one set of said plurality of roller pairs is spaced axially from at least one other set of said plurality of roller pairs.

14(New). The assembly of claim 13 wherein there are four of said sets of said roller pairs.

15(New). The assembly of claim 14 wherein two of said sets of roller pairs lie in a first common plane, and wherein the two remaining set of roller pairs lie in a second common plane that is spaced axially from the first common plane.

16(New). The assembly of claim 14 wherein each of said four sets of roller pairs lies in an associated plane and wherein each plane is spaced axially from the other planes.

17(New). A slip shaft assembly for use with a steering column, comprising:

an elongated tubular outer shaft;

an elongated inner shaft extending lengthwise within said outer shaft; and

a slip joint coupling said inner and outer shafts and operative to transmit torque in opposite directions between said shafts and to enable relative axial movement between said shafts, said slip joint including a plurality of rollers mounted on said inner shaft for

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rotation about respective roller axes transverse to a longitudinal axis of said inner shaft,
wherein at least some of the rollers are axially spaced and support said shafts against
relative pivotal movement.